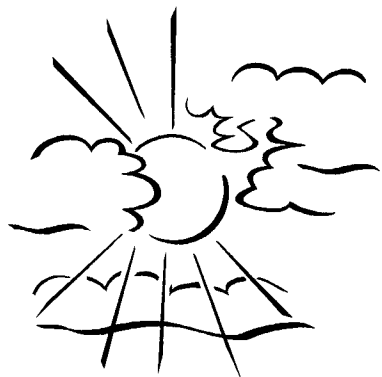


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Articles in Today's Clips

Thursday, February 9, 2006

(Be sure to maximize your screen to read your clips)

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Feb 8, 6:13 PM EST

Capitol Hill Cool to Some Bush Budget Cuts

By DAVID ESPO

AP Special Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) -- Congressional Republicans on Wednesday shunned President Bush's election-year call to cut Social Security benefits, and one committee chairman accused the administration of seeking to end "a pittance for widows and widowers."

"I have no plans to pursue these proposals," said GOP Sen. Charles Grassley of Iowa, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee.

The budget that Bush submitted to Congress on Monday proposes eliminating a \$255 lump-sum death benefit that has been part of Social Security for more than 50 years. It also urges Congress to cut off monthly survivor benefits to 16- and 17-year-old high school dropouts.

If approved, the two proposals would save a combined \$3.4 billion over the next decade, according to administration estimates.

Based on early reaction, or lack of it, prospects for congressional passage seemed remote.

Democrats hastened to criticize the proposals on Tuesday and continued their attack into a second day.

Both Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, R-Tenn., and House Speaker Dennis Hastert, R-Ill., were quick to applaud Bush's overall budget proposals on Monday, but their aides declined repeated requests over two days for comments on the president's suggested change in Social Security. Rep. Bill Thomas, R-Calif., chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, also offered no reaction.

Sen. Jon Kyl, R-Ariz., a member of the Senate GOP leadership, said, "I haven't looked at that," adding he was unable to offer an opinion.

As the Finance Committee chairman, Grassley has jurisdiction over Social Security, and he made clear the administration's proposals would not be on the year's agenda.

"The administration didn't consult with me on these proposals. Even if someone had, I'd be hard-pressed to give them a second look," he said in a statement.

"I can't see how ending a pittance for widows and widowers, and modest benefits for kids who have lost a parent, would be good policy decisions," Grassley said.

Bush's budget also renewed the president's call for a complete overhaul of Social Security, including creation of personal savings accounts and a reduction in future benefits promised to younger workers.

Despite congressional majorities strengthened in the last elections, Republicans flinched from his proposals a year ago, and legislation failed to make it to the floor of either the House or Senate.

Grassley has said he does not intend to spend time this year on those proposals.

Administration officials have described the \$255 death benefit as an administrative burden because it is paid in some cases but not all, and said its elimination is unlikely to cause hardship. They also say the provision relating to 16- and 17-year-olds is an incentive for them to remain in school.

Michigan Report

February 8, 2006

BUDGET: FORMULA FOR SMALLER U.'S/INCREASED BED TAX

Governor Jennifer Granholm will propose using a formula for allocating part of the spending increases for the state's 12 smaller four-year universities in her 2006-07 budget, sources have confirmed, and will **propose boosting the so-called bed tax on hospitals and Health Maintenance Organizations to maximize the return on federal Medicaid funds**. A formula would not apply to the three research universities which all have medical schools.

State Budget Director Mary Lannoye will present the budget to a joint meeting of the House and Senate Appropriations committees on Thursday, and several sources characterized the budget as a "status quo" document as the state goes into an election year.

"The theme is education clearly, long-term investments, which is appropriate," one source said.

Few new dramatic proposals or controversial measures will be proposed, sources said. For example, the governor will propose no prison closings or State Police post closings as she did a year ago.

She will call again for the Legislature to close approximately \$110 million in tax loopholes. She will ask them to pass again many of the loophole closings that were approved in November, but which she vetoed as part of the controversy over a Single Business Tax cut.

Ms. Granholm will also ask the state to once again increase the liquor license fee, which could raise more than \$20 million.

Gongwer News Service has already reported that Ms. Granholm will request an increase of \$200 per student in the state's per pupil allowance, which would boost the basic allowance to \$7,075.

Sources indicated that Ms. Granholm will also ask for increases in early childhood education, in funding for school districts with declining enrollments, and a \$4 million increase in adult education. The adult education increase will be one of the largest that item has seen in some years.

And the budget will propose restoring vision and hearing screening for children by moving the item from the Department of Community Health to the School Aid Fund, sources said.

One of the biggest changes expected in the budget is how a 2 percent increase for the state's public universities will be allocated. According to sources, the three largest schools – Michigan State University, the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor and Wayne State University – will be allocated straight 2 percent increases.

The other 12 schools will get a straight 1 percent increase, sources said, with the remaining 1 percent increase allocated on a formula basis. That would mean some schools might see an increase of greater than 2 percent and others less than 2 percent.

The details of how the formula would work were not forthcoming, although a source did say some factors would be based on the work of the commission chaired by Lt. Gov. John Cherry.

Ms. Granholm will not propose any tuition restraint language in the budget (that would deny the increase if the schools boost tuition higher than a certain level), although one source said she will separately urge universities to show restraint in raising tuition. University officials had already indicated they would oppose any tuition restraint language if it were included.

In the DCH budget, Ms. Granholm will not try again to get a Medicaid tax on physicians approved as she did last year, sources said. But the administration has already talked to hospital and HMO officials about agreeing to an increase in the so-called bed tax – the quality adjustment payments – that are used to boost federal Medicaid matching funds.

The amount of the specific increase was not revealed, but several sources said the increase should raise some \$40 million in federal monies. A portion of that increase would go to help finance the health insurance proposal Ms. Granholm made in her State of the State address, sources said.

Neither hospital nor HMO officials have agreed yet to the proposal, but one source said since it will help expand health care coverage, “We might take one for the team.”

Officials investigate baby's life-threatening injuries

STACY LANGLEY, The Huron Daily Tribune

02/09/2006

BAD AXE — Weighing 7 pounds at the age of 1 month, a Bad Axe baby boy is in the fight of his life, and investigators from the Huron County Sheriff's Office and Huron County Prosecutor's Office are working together to get to the bottom of what they say are life-threatening injuries.

Huron County Prosecutor Mark J. Gaertner said the baby boy was in "critical condition" at Hurley Medical Center in Flint this morning. Gaertner said he and four investigators from the sheriff's office are "looking into allegations of child abuse involving the baby."

Gaertner wasn't releasing any details of the case at this time but said "the case is top priority right now."

"We're gathering information, and we will be getting to the bottom of it," he said. "Right now we're doing a lot of back tracking and piecing things together and building forward."

The case came to light after a 10:47 a.m. Sunday call to 9-1-1. The baby's father, a 23-year-old Bad Axe man, reported the baby was having trouble breathing.

Bad Axe Police along with Central Huron Ambulance were dispatched to the North Van Dyke apartment. They discovered the baby had sustained serious head injuries and transported the child by ambulance to Huron Medical Center in Bad Axe. He was then taken to Hurley Medical Center where he remains today.

Look for updates about this story in future editions of the Huron Daily Tribune.

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Man Could Be Charged In Shooting Of Son

Man Remains In Custody

POSTED: 7:17 pm EST February 8, 2006

A father could face charges after his 1-year-old son was shot in the leg.

The shooting happened at about 2:15 p.m. Tuesday, when police said they were called to the apartment complex in Ypsilanti.

According to reports, the father, Antonio Harris (pictured) was at home watching over his children -- a 2-year-old girl, a 3-year-old boy and a 1-year-old boy -- when the younger boy was shot in the leg.

When police arrived, the man told them he left the apartment to go to the store, and his 3-year-old son found the gun under a sofa cushion, Local 4 reported.

The 3-year-old told police his father did it.

Police said they do not believe a 3-year-old could pull the trigger, adding that Harris may have been handling the gun before it went off, Local 4 reported.

The mother was not home at the time but defended her boyfriend.

"No, he didn't shoot my baby," said Nicole Harris.

Police tested the father for gunpowder residue and the results came back positive.

The baby is fine and is expected to return home.

The father is currently being held on a \$50,000 bond. He faces charges of child abuse for leaving children alone with a loaded gun, Local 4 reported.

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Witness: Child swing was used improperly

Trace Christenson
The Enquirer

A prosecution witness testified Wednesday that a child's swing was not being used properly when an 11-week-old Battle Creek infant died more than two years ago. David Campbell of Westfield Center, Ohio, a child product engineer and consultant, testified that the Graco child swing should have been used with a safety belt and with the back reclined for a young child.

He was called by Assistant Calhoun County Prosecutor Dierdre Ford during the second day of the manslaughter trial of Melissa Whitfield.

Whitfield, 27, is charged in the Oct. 27, 2003, death of Blake Wilson, who stopped breathing while in the swing at Whitfield's former business, Melissa's Day Care at 235 Eldred St.

An autopsy showed the child died because his head slumped to one side and forward and he was not able to breathe.

Testimony continues today at Calhoun County Circuit Court before Judge Conrad Sindt. Campbell, who worked for Fisher Price and then Century Products, which merged with Graco, said the swing, manufactured in 2000, required the use of the waist strap to prevent young children from sliding down in the seat.

"It can't be used safely without the belt," Campbell said.

And he said the seat should be reclined "for younger children who can't hold their head up."

The third significant safety rule, Campbell said, was not to leave the child in the seat unattended.

"They need adult supervision," he said.

Ford alleged in her opening statement Tuesday that Whitfield was talking to her mother for 10 to 20 minutes and not watching the infant. And Ford said there was no strap on the chair and it was in the upright position.

During cross examination by Defense Attorney Susan Mladenoff, Campbell said the manual for the seat does not warn that the seat should be reclined or that a headrest should be used for younger children.

He also agreed that a cautionary requirement not to leave the child unattended does not mean looking at the child all the time.

"You want to keep them in view and be able to listen," he said. "As long as you are able to see the child, it doesn't mean you have to look at it all the time."

Robert Demski, investigator for the county medical examiner, testified he went to the Whitfield home a couple of hours after the child died and used dolls to determine the position of the child when he was found. Demski said he and Whitfield discussed the position before photographs, introduced in court, were taken.

But Mladenoff challenged the photos, asking Demski if the dolls which were used were of the same weight and height as the child and noting that two pictures show the dolls in slightly different positions.

"We were having trouble" with the dolls, Demski said. "We accomplished what we were

looking for. I was having her show me what she remembered."

Earlier, Spencer Wilson, the father of the child, said he spent the morning of Oct. 27 listening to music with his son and stepdaughter.

"I was giving them kisses and just enjoying the morning and how happy I was," he said.

But later that day, Wilson said he received a phone call that his son was not breathing.

He said Whitfield called him and said over and over, "I'm sorry, I'm sorry, it's Blake, it's Blake. You have to get over here; he is not breathing."

Wilson said as he drove to the hospital, he didn't know what to think.

"It was scary and freaky. I freaked out. My son wasn't breathing. I was scared for my son's life. It was a terrifying moment."

Trace Christenson covers crime and courts. He can be reached at 966-0685 or tchrist@battlecr.gannett.com.

Originally published February 9, 2006

Convicted Molester Faces Child Porn Charges

53-Year-Old Serving Lifetime Probation

POSTED: 1:15 pm EST February 8, 2006

A 53-year-old Ypsilanti Township man was arrested Tuesday when suspected child pornography was found on his computer, according to the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Department.

The man -- who is already serving lifetime probation from a child molestation conviction in Arizona -- was arrested when he arrived for a meeting with his probation officer Tuesday, Sheriff's Cmdr. Dave Egeler said in a report by *The Ann Arbor News*.

His probation officer learned that the man may have accessed child pornography over the Internet, according to the sheriff's department. Police searched the man's apartment with a warrant and found sexually explicit images of children, according to Egeler.

The man is being held at the Washtenaw County jail and is expected to face charges of child pornography possession, using a computer to commit a felony and evidence tampering for attempting to delete images, Egeler said.

The man's name was not released pending an arraignment Wednesday afternoon.

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Teacher's family takes case public

Thursday, February 09, 2006

By Scott Hagenshagen@citpat.com -- 768-4929

Relatives of a suspended Napoleon High School teacher are taking her side of the story to local residents.

The family of Lora Manders is inviting the public to a meeting at 6:30 p.m. Feb. 23 at the Napoleon Township Hall to discuss the circumstances behind her December paid suspension as a basketball coach and business teacher.

School officials cited her 2001 failure to report an alleged affair between co-Principal Scott Ashe and a female student. A subsequent internal investigation found the female high school student's claims were false and exonerated Ashe.

Ashe plans to attend the meeting.

"I'll be there," he said.

Family members said it is uncertain whether Manders will attend. Efforts this morning to reach Manders and her attorney, Gregg Iddings, were unsuccessful.

Manders sued Ashe in the fall of 2004 for defamation, claiming he spread false rumors about her and told people they engaged in an extramarital affair. Allegations of an affair between Ashe and the student, a 2001 graduate, emerged as part of that lawsuit. The student told Manders that she had an affair with Ashe, according to Manders' deposition.

Now, members of Manders' family, including her parents and brother, are distributing depositions from the ongoing court case in Jackson County.

"We want people to know it's a big cover-up," said Brenda Marcum, Manders' mother. "That school is giving out false information."

Napoleon Superintendent Jim Graham denies this allegation.

"I truly believe they know the truth, and they don't like the truth, and they want to distort people's opinion," Graham said. "At this point, I'm very disappointed that there's very little truth in what they're trying to do."

Kurt Marcum, Manders' brother, has copied thousands of pages of legal documents and placed them, against newspaper policy, in about 10 Citizen Patriot newspaper tubes in the Napoleon area during the past week.

He also said he has handed out about 15 packets to other people who were interested.

The packet includes depositions from the lawsuit.

Ashe learned of the distribution when a Napoleon resident brought it to his attention.

"I was very upset with it. I still can't believe what they're doing," Ashe said.

According to Manders' deposition, the student walked into Manders' counseling office in the winter of 2001 and said she had been sleeping with Ashe. According to a signed affidavit, the affair started the summer before the student's junior year, when she was 16, the legal age of consent in Michigan.

A Michigan State Police report of an investigation conducted in October 2004 -- when police first learned of the allegations through the state **Department of Human Services** -- says the student told police the alleged affair was consensual.

State police Detective Sgt. Duane Hickok said his investigation ceased when he learned it was not a crime in 1999, when the alleged affair began, for a teacher or administrator to sleep with a student. It wasn't until 2002 that a Michigan law took effect making it a crime for school personnel to engage in sexual relations with a student of any age.

Even though the district later declared the student's allegations were false, the school board suspended Manders with pay in December because she failed to report the allegations when the student first told her, as required by state law.

Iddings said Wednesday that Manders didn't know when the alleged affair between Ashe and the student had begun, assumed it was after the girl turned 18, and therefore thought she did not have an obligation to report it to officials.

The suspension case is scheduled to go before the state tenure commission review panel, where Manders will either be awarded her job back or be terminated from the district. The hearing has not been scheduled.

Her defamation suit is scheduled for trial March 27 in Circuit Judge Chad Schmucker's court, where the student is expected to testify.

But Manders' family wants the community to know both sides of the story before the trial, they said.

"My daughter had a chance to walk away from this, and she said, 'Absolutely not,' " Brenda Marcum said. "It's going to be 'he said she said' ! but it will come out in that lawsuit."

Local columnists

The Detroit Free Press

If not checked for accuracy, criminal list will hurt innocent

February 9, 2006

BY BILL VANSICKLE

Tina VanSickle has been on quite the crime spree for the last five years, if you believe State Police records released last week by the Michigan Department of Education to school districts. They list her with seven misdemeanor convictions and one felony, for breaking and entering. This news would shock students, friends and colleagues who know the real Tina VanSickle, a caring, dedicated middle school computer teacher and cheerleading coach in Morley Stanwood Community Schools in Mecosta County, about 45 miles west of Mt. Pleasant.

It was a shock to me, her husband of more than 20 years, a fellow teacher and president of the Morley Stanwood Education Association.

But we all know better. There's not a twig of truth to these State Police reports. Tina has never had so much as a traffic ticket, let alone a rap sheet the rival of many a street criminal.

So imagine our surprise -- and humiliation, disgust and outrage -- when our superintendent, Linda Myers, last week informed Tina of the State Police report listing her criminal history.

We understand how the release of these records came about. The Legislature passed a new state law in September with the aim of getting employees who have been convicted of sex crimes out of our schools. It was implemented in January.

As teachers, we applaud the efforts of our legislators to keep individuals who have been convicted of a felony, such as a criminal sexual conduct charge, out of our school buildings. All school employees stand firm on the idea that we must continue to protect our children from predators in our society.

Fortunately for my wife and me, Morley Stanwood is a small, close-knit community, where everyone knows one another. We typically live in the same area, shop together, attend church together and have decent relationships outside of our school.

Superintendent Myers knew the document was in error and advised Tina to visit the State Police post to be fingerprinted, so we could clear up this problem.

When I called Michigan Education Association headquarters in East Lansing for advice and aid, I was relieved to find out that the MEA successfully secured a temporary restraining order preventing the list from being released to all Michigan media outlets.

I also learned my wife was not alone in her dilemma. The MEA has fielded hundreds of calls from teachers and school employees in the past week, victims of mistaken identity or errors in the reports. The errors are obvious -- some of those falsely accused would have been only 5 or 6 years old when they supposedly committed felonies.

Our immediate concern was for my wife's career. I have seen how the media work in our society. A person is guilty until proved innocent. I could just imagine what would happen if this alleged conviction record had been published all over the state.

I was appalled then to read that state House Speaker Craig DeRoche, R-Novi, is pushing for this list to be published. We all believe in freedom of the press and the public's right to know, but this legislation was just implemented last month.

So why the rush to publish? The Legislature delayed implementation of the law for three months. We're asking only for a couple more weeks to clear up mistakes and make sure that whatever is released to the public is accurate. The public has a right to know the truth.

After all, people's lives and reputations are at stake here. To politicians like DeRoche, I ask: What about the rights of those individuals wrongly accused, like my wife?

At the very least, let's give school districts time to determine if the lists given to them of employees convicted of crimes are indeed accurate before we splash their names in publications and broadcasts around the state.

This unwanted distraction has cast a pall over our profession, forcing hundreds of innocent teachers to leave their classrooms, to lose time from working with their students, so they can go to their nearest State Police post and get fingerprinted to clear their names.

Let me emphasize -- this has nothing to do with trying to protect sex offenders and other felons who may be working in our classrooms. Convicted felons have no place in our schools.

But what price must the innocent pay? If this process of stripping citizens of their constitutional protections continues, we must ask: Who will be next? The plumber, the autoworker, the carpenter and maybe even, yes, the politician?

BILL VANSICKLE teaches biology at Morley Stanwood High School in Mecosta County. Write to him in care of the Free Press Editorial Page, 600 W. Fort St., Detroit, MI 48226.

Lawmakers: Don't release list of school workers with convictions

2/8/2006, 5:08 p.m. ET

By DAVID EGGERT
The Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — Some Republican lawmakers said Wednesday the state Department of Education should not immediately release the names of school workers with criminal convictions, partly echoing a call from the state's largest teachers' union.

Republican Sens. Ron Jelinek of Three Oaks and Mike Goschka of Brant said they have heard from school superintendents or others who say some teachers and others are wrongly included on the list. The report matching criminal history information with more than 200,000 school employees, which was sent to districts last week, should not be made public until the information is accurate, lawmakers said.

"We should reveal those found guilty of crimes but never those law-abiding individuals who have dedicated their lives to educating our children," said Jelinek, who added that school retirees are wrongly listed.

In a Friday memo to districts, state superintendent Mike Flanagan said the search of the State Police's criminal database — prompted by a new law targeting sex offenders — resulted in some "false positives" due to stolen Social Security numbers or matches involving common names. The check is believed to have revealed thousands of felony offenses, though it's unclear how many employees have multiple convictions.

The 160,000-member Michigan Education Association has won a court order temporarily barring the release of names to the media. It says lawmakers should pass a bill immediately withdrawing the list because of "mass" inaccuracies.

Sex offenses will result in firing. Those with felony convictions must receive approval from the superintendent and school board to stay employed.

Lawmakers, however, said the current list needs to be double-checked, not scrapped entirely. Wednesday's comments from Senate Republicans differ from last's week announcement by House Republicans of a bill forcing the state to release the names.

A spokesman for House Speaker Craig DeRoche, R-Novi, said Wednesday the list should be accurate but stressed that most of it already is, estimating that 24 of 25 names are correct. Matt Resch said the education department must have been confident with the list before sending it to districts last week.

"It is important that while we make sure innocent people aren't on the list by mistake, we also take action to remove those people who aren't innocent before they pose a threat to students," Resch said.

Our immediate concern was for my wife's career. I have seen how the media work in our society. A person is guilty until proved innocent. I could just imagine what would happen if this alleged conviction record had been published all over the state.

I was appalled then to read that state House Speaker Craig DeRoche, R-Novi, is pushing for this list to be published. We all believe in freedom of the press and the public's right to know, but this legislation was just implemented last month.

So why the rush to publish? The Legislature delayed implementation of the law for three months. We're asking only for a couple more weeks to clear up mistakes and make sure that whatever is released to the public is accurate. The public has a right to know the truth.

After all, people's lives and reputations are at stake here. To politicians like DeRoche, I ask:

What about the rights of those individuals wrongly accused, like my wife?

At the very least, let's give school districts time to determine if the lists given to them of employees convicted of crimes are indeed accurate before we splash their names in publications and broadcasts around the state.

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BILL VANSICKLE teaches biology at Morley Stanwood High School in Mecosta County. Write to him in care of the Free Press Editorial Page, 600 W. Fort St., Detroit, MI 48226.

REPORT NO. --, VOLUME 35

Michigan Report

February 8, 2006

SENATE REPUBLICANS CRITICIZE TEACHER CONVICT LIST

The current list of teachers convicted of crimes needs to be cleansed before it is released to ensure that otherwise law-abiding individuals are not included in the "list of the damned" before it becomes public, several Senate Republicans urged Wednesday.

The comments came as something of a surprise since House Republicans, including Speaker Craig DeRoche (R-Novi) have been pushing for immediate release of the report.

Release of the report was held up last week by an Ingham Circuit judge after the Michigan Education Association argued release of the list could harm individuals whose names might be on it for non-violent, minor offenses.

Sen. Ron Jelinek (R-Three Oaks) said evidence indicates that there are people listed for nothing more than traffic tickets, or minor financial transgressions.

"This list has the ability to ruin a person's life," he said on the Senate floor. "I urge the courts and the Department of Education not to release this list until it has been checked and re-checked."

And Sen. Mike Goschka (R-Brant) said the list should be purged of any individual who was not convicted of a major crime and who might pose a danger to schoolchildren.

A spokesperson said Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema (R-Wyoming) had not yet talked to Mr. DeRoche about the issue but there was some suggestion the House might be willing to delay their call for immediate release of the list.

MIRS

February 8, 2006

Jelinek Wants Sex Offender List Modified

Since legislation was introduced last week requiring the Michigan Education Association (MEA) to release the names of school employees who showed up on a sex-offender search to the public, complaints about the program have flooded headlines across the state.

The legislation was intended to weed those with sex offender backgrounds out of schools. The state police checked the list and have turned up about 4,600 people with a record out of more than 200,000 school employees. Those who turn up on the list are supposed to be fired.

However, for about a week, teachers and school employees from all over Michigan have complained that they've been wrongly put on the list. Teachers with parking tickets and other non-sex offender related crimes are outraged that their names have appeared on the list.

Today, Sen. Ron **JELINEK** (R-Three Oaks) raised concerns over the new law and asked the Department of Education and the courts not to release names unrelated to sex-offenses.

"Being put on this list brands a person for life," Jelinek said.

Tuesday, Speaker of the House Craig **DeROCHE** (R-Nov), told the *Detroit Free Press* that he didn't want to pull the legislation, which he introduced last week.

Metro Detroit

No cause of death yet for man found outside his home

Farmington Hills resident didn't have heart attack

February 9, 2006

BY FRANK WITSIL
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

An autopsy on the body of a 68-year-old Farmington Hills man found outside his home Tuesday morning indicated he did not suffer from a heart attack or stroke, nor did injuries to his face cause his death, Oakland County deputy chief forensic pathologist Kanu Virani said Wednesday. However, Virani added that he is awaiting results of toxicology tests, a common procedure, before determining a cause of death.

Police are investigating the death of James Lyle, who lived with his 67-year-old wife in an independent living senior center. Lyle left his home about 9 p.m. Monday and did not return. Initial reports indicate the death was an accident.

Police said Tuesday that Lyle and his wife, Maureen Lyle, had gotten into an argument. Maureen Lyle said Tuesday there was no dispute between them and that her husband left their home to buy a New York Times newspaper. She also told the Free Press that her husband had a heart condition.

James Lyle had a scrape on his face and nose but did not appear to have any injuries that would have caused his death, Virani said.

The Medical Examiner's Office is responsible for determining whether the death was an accident. Lyle, a retired advertisement executive, appeared to fall face down on the ground and might have succumbed to hypothermia, which might have been hastened if he had been drinking alcohol, Virani said.

Virani said he would not know for sure until he receives more test results, which are expected by the end of the week.

Contact **FRANK WITSIL** at 248-351-3690 or witsil@freepress.com.

CHRIS CHRISTOFF: My goof: DeVos isn't out to kill Medicaid

February 9, 2006

Detroit Free Press

Dick DeVos: "Who knows what the situation will be?"

Sometimes, what you think you hear isn't what the other guy said.

I erred Monday when I wrote that Dick DeVos, the presumptive Republican nominee for governor, would do away with all or part of Medicaid, the government health care program that now serves 1.4 million Michigan residents.

That was based on a recent television interview in which DeVos suggested eliminating the state Single Business Tax to stimulate new jobs. During that discussion, he said we should "take a look" at what Missouri did with Medicaid, which was to wipe it out by 2008, while the state immediately cut off Medicaid to 100,000 people.

The Missouri Legislature has two years to replace Medicaid, presumably with a less costly program.

I thought DeVos was endorsing Missouri's Medicaid experiment, which has produced stirring media accounts of individuals' hardship. Such a move would make him an inviting target for Democrats.

But DeVos told me after my column appeared that he was only using Missouri's Medicaid strategy to illustrate a possible way to replace Michigan's Single Business Tax (SBT). In other words, just eliminate the SBT to make the state more business-friendly, and force the Legislature and governor to deal with the resulting \$1.9-billion hole in the state budget.

Not wipe out Medicaid.

I misunderstood. It was my mistake. Honest, but regrettable. I should have made a better effort to make his position clear.

"I have never, nor would I ever, advocate the elimination of Medicaid," DeVos said Wednesday.

"This program needs to be preserved for those who truly need it: that being the poor and vulnerable. It's a very important program for them."

The "total elimination" strategy gave birth to the landmark Proposal A school finance plan in 1993. The Legislature nuked all school property taxes, forcing a mad, six-month scramble to piece together a new finance system, which voters approved in 1994. DeVos says Granholm had three years to deal with the SBT and made little progress.

But what *would* DeVos do about Medicaid? It's the state's fastest-growing budget problem, consuming one of every four state tax dollars.

"Who knows what the situation will be a year from now?" he said. "Strategies and solutions will be developed over time. There are other program ideas being developed in other states. Other governors are looking at creative solutions."

Many will eagerly watch what Medicaid solutions DeVos proposes in the coming months.

Contact **CHRIS CHRISTOFF** at 517-372-8660 or christoff@freepress.com.

Ann Arbor News

Letters

February 9, 2006

Try looking at Medicaid as a Christian would

As a follower of Jesus, who came "to preach good news to the poor" (Luke 4:18), I found the Jan. 30 front page story in The News - "Medicaid changes hurt poor, study says" - to be troubling. If this study is true, I think it would be morally reprehensible to approve the proposed changes.

Harvey A. Stob, Ann Arbor

STATE BRIEFS

LANSING

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Budget has good news for schools, taxpayers

It's budget day, and the winners next year will be public schools and most taxpayers, who won't face a tax increase.

The losers? Cities, some townships and state programs that would have to tighten or trim under a virtually flat 2006-07 budget Gov. Jennifer Granholm will unveil today.

The governor could produce political sparks with her plan to revamp the Michigan Merit Award Scholarship for college students and to wrest more federal money to provide health insurance for working families.

But the budget is expected to remain a pedestrian affair.

By Chris Christoff

DFP

Wayne County

Problems mounting at school

Mismanagement alleged at juvenile detention facility

February 9, 2006

BY ZACHARY GORCHOW
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

The private company hired to run the school serving children at Wayne County's Juvenile Detention Facility was forced out this month amid allegations of mismanagement, and the school's board has been accused of failing in its oversight duties, potentially costing county taxpayers thousands of dollars.

Innovative Educational Programs (IEP), the New Jersey-based company that managed the Benjamin Carson Academy from 1999 until Feb. 1, charged triple what was necessary for administrative overhead and didn't pay teachers what they were promised, among other issues, according to a teacher and the Wayne County Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA). The school's board also repeatedly skirted RESA's demands to fix the problems, the agency said. The mismanagement has contributed to a school deficit, the size of which the county still is trying to determine, but promises to cover.

IEP's executive dismissed some of the criticism, though those involved with the Carson academy, a charter school that provides education to the 3,000 to 4,000 children who go through the Wayne County Juvenile Detention Facility each year, are pinning much of the blame on IEP. Wayne RESA, the charter-granting authority for the academy, has terminated the school's charter effective June 30.

Regardless, education cannot cease at the facility because the county is required to have an educational provider for children there.

Marietha Lomakoski, a special education teacher at the school, said IEP consistently put its profit margin ahead of the best interests of the children, sometimes ending the school year early to save money.

"I have to say I'm very glad they're gone," she said. "They knew how to cash out on their own pockets."

IEP Chief Executive Officer Anthony O'Donnell said it's not surprising that some of the school's employees are critical, although he dismissed the relevance of such criticism. He also criticized accusations that IEP sought to end the school year early, saying only the board can take such action.

O'Donnell said criticism of IEP seemed to ramp up once funding dropped.

"RESA has made a lot of misleading statements. Someone has their own agenda," he said. "As soon as the funding started to dramatically diminish, suddenly IEP is just too expensive."

When the Carson academy opened under IEP's management in 1999, it was praised as a first-of-its-kind charter school in a correctional institution.

But eventually RESA soured on IEP. A memo from RESA officials dated June 6, 2005, indicates that IEP's costs run "a little under 30%" while local school districts "get the same thing done for under 10%."

O'Donnell said RESA's assertion that IEP's costs were 30% of the school's budget is misleading.

"We had infrastructure and expenses that were legitimate," he said, declining to discuss specifics. In December, RESA informed the Carson board that it would reconsider a decision to terminate the school's charter if the board took several actions, including firing IEP. IEP quit before the board could act.

O'Donnell said the school's funding model was not viable due to a decline in state funds. The state has gradually reduced a special subsidy for schools housing court-placed students from \$11.3 million in the 2001-02 fiscal year to \$8 million for this year.

So far, schoolchildren have been unaffected by the turmoil, officials said.

Sue Hamilton-Smith, interim director of Wayne County's Department of Child and Family Services, questioned IEP's contention that state cuts left it without enough money and said its philosophy concerned her.

"You're not going to have enough money to do what? To keep your profit margin the same or educate kids?" Hamilton-Smith asked.

Wayne RESA Superintendent Marlene Davis wrote the five then-members of the Carson school's board April 18, 2005, to inform them of "significant serious findings, specifically in the area of school finance," at the school made by a RESA review team.

Davis laid out 18 actions that the Carson board had to take to avoid having RESA terminate the school's charter, the most significant related to budgeting and IEP's administrative costs.

But the budget proposals in the response letter from board president Ron Schigur, in RESA's view, lacked key financial specifics and manipulated the numbers by stretching out the school's fiscal year through Aug. 31, when it ends June 30.

Schigur has been replaced. Messages left at the school and for Schigur were not returned.

Hamilton-Smith said the county would pay to keep the school running until a new operator can be found.

"I think that there's going to be some kind financial hole that we have to fill," she said. "What we're trying to weed through now is what kind of shape IEP has left us in."

Contact ZACHARY GORCHOW at 313-223-4536 or zgorchow

The Benjamin Carson Academy

- What is it?

It is a school for Wayne County children housed at the Juvenile Detention Facility who are awaiting the outcome of their case or placement in a residential facility for substance abuse or mental health treatment. Most children there are 15 or 16, although a judge can order the placement of any juvenile. Children may spend anywhere from less than a day to weeks at the center and school.

Children who stay there for longer periods generally have severe mental illness or are charged as adults. The county sends children accused of minor crimes or those in need of a specific type of treatment to one of several privately run facilities throughout the county.

Who's in charge?

As a charter school, it has a school board, which is responsible for hiring someone to operate the school. The operator was Innovative Educational Programs, but that organization terminated its contract this month.

All charter schools must have an authorizer. The Carson school's charter was granted by the Wayne County Regional Educational Service Agency, which appoints the members of its school board.

And because the school serves children at the county's Juvenile Detention Facility, county government is responsible for making sure the children there are educated.

Zachary Gorchow

Published February 9, 2006

Teen charged with murder in carjacking Retired physician run over in Nov. at service station

By Susan Vela
Lansing State Journal

CHARLOTTE - Sixteen-year-old William Jenkins was arraigned Wednesday on an open murder charge in the carjacking death of well-known retired Lansing physician Louis Harrington.

Eaton County District Judge Julie Reincke asked Jenkins if he understood the charges. Jenkins - T-shirted and shackled - nodded his head. He was arraigned on the open murder charge and re-arraigned on carjacking and retail fraud charges in connection with the incident.

The judge denied bond, leaving the teen at the Eaton County Youth Facility and awaiting a Feb. 17 preliminary examination to determine if there's enough evidence to go to trial.

"If Dr. Harrington had recovered, there would not be a murder charge," said Mike Eagen, Eaton County's chief assistant prosecutor.

Harrington, an 83-year-old Delta Township man, was gassing up his wife's car about 5 p.m. Nov. 30 at the Meijer gas station on West Saginaw Highway in Delta Township when police said Jenkins jumped into the car. According to police, the teen backed over Harrington and then drove forward, dragging him several feet. The teen quickly abandoned the vehicle and was arrested within minutes.

Harrington spent his last days in a coma and died Jan. 17 of complications from head injuries.

However, "you're not really looking here at some cold, calculated evil person," said defense attorney Michael Hocking after Jenkins' arraignment. "We're ... looking at an inexperienced kid that, according to (the prosecutor's) charge, did something pretty stupid that had a horrible, tragic result."

Hocking said he most likely would waive a preliminary examination for Jenkins. The only good reason for pursuing one, he said, would be if there were serious issues about whether the injuries were the cause of death.

Contact Susan Vela at 702-4248 or svela@lsj.com.

What's next

- A preliminary examination for William Jenkins, 16, of Lansing, is scheduled for 10 a.m. Feb. 17 in Eaton County District Court.

Child support plan offers a chance to catch up

Any time the price of an item is reduced 75 percent, it's a bargain. And when that bargain includes the opportunity to wipe a substantial debt off the books, it's too good of a deal to ignore.

So we hope that up to 25,000 Michigan parents take advantage of an offer made by the Michigan Department of Human Services last week. The department is looking for those parents who stopped making child-support payments when their former spouses were receiving cash welfare benefits and whose children are now age 18 or older. From now until April 30, if those parents step forward, the department will forgive 75 percent of the debt they owe to the state in back child support.

There are strings attached. To qualify for the deal, delinquent parents must pay 25 percent of the back child support they owe to the state, along with 100 percent of back child support they owe to their former spouses and 100 percent of any fees that are owed to the Friend of the Court.

While they won't be getting off scot-free, parents who opt for the deal are likely to save thousands of dollars in money owed to the state. Officials say about 25,000 parents qualify for the offer, and they owe an average of about \$14,000. For the parent with the average debt, that means paying the state \$3,500 will eliminate the remaining \$10,500 owed to the government - as long as back support to ex-spouses and any court fees are taken care of as well.

Officials are hoping that the offer will collect about \$18 million for the state. That is only a sliver of the \$9 billion owed in back child support in Michigan by an estimated 250,000 people, but it is a step in the right direction.

More importantly, it will give parents who are weighed down by big debts for back child support an opportunity to get that expense off their backs at a huge reduction.

As Marilyn Stephen, director of the Department of Human Services' Office of Child Support, told the Detroit News, "We consider this to be a win for everybody."

In making the offer, the state is agreeing to forgo a big chunk of money which it is owed. But it's likely that much of that money will never be paid, and getting back a small fraction of it will at least allow the state to recoup some of its losses and let parents get out from under burdensome debt.

Battle Creek Enquirer

Originally published February 7, 2006

The Detroit News

February 9, 2006

Electronic child support pay to begin

The state will begin distributing child support payments electronically in Livingston County on Wednesday. The payments will be disbursed via direct deposit into a personal checking/savings account or to a debit card. Call (517) 546-0230.

Thursday, February 09, 2006

Around Metro Detroit: Spotlight

Birmingham woman supports foster families

Kim Kozlowski / The Detroit News

Most people have a life-altering moment.

For Elizabeth Brazilian, it came when she visited an innovative residential treatment facility for abused children run by a national child abuse organization, Childhelp USA.

"It really makes you want to get out there and make a difference in a child's life," Brazilian said. So that's what she did. Brazilian left her high-paying corporate job, started raising money and recently started a Michigan chapter of Childhelp USA in Rochester Hills to help foster children in Oakland, Wayne, Macomb and Washtenaw counties.

"It seemed like such a more important way to spend your days," said Brazilian, 64, of Birmingham.

The organization describes itself as unique among foster care agencies in Michigan because it trains families to be therapeutic foster families, which means they get the support they need to have a successful life with the foster child. Many children in foster care have bounced from one home to another, and Childhelp USA seeks to change that.

The organization also has a mentoring component, with Michigan Supreme Court Justice Maura Corrigan among the mentors. It also features ongoing therapy with a social worker for the entire family.

"The purpose is for the foster child to have a successful placement and the child is happy in that placement," Brazilian said. "In order to do that, a therapeutic component is very crucial."

Jessica Lindsey, a 20-year-old who spent years in foster care, likes the concept behind Childhelp USA, especially the part about mentoring.

"All foster youth need a mentor," said Lindsey, who is being mentored by Corrigan. "You need someone to support you."

Brazilian teamed up with Kathy Schweitzer, a real estate broker from Grosse Pointe Farms, to start the local organization. Schweitzer visited one of Childhelp USA's treatment facilities in Arizona, where the national headquarters is located, and felt she needed to bring a similar program to Southeast Michigan.

Childhelp USA was founded in 1959 by actresses Sara O'Meara and Yvonne Fedderson of the 1950s comedy show "The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet."

There are 16 chapters of Childhelp USA throughout the country and Brazilian said more are needed. She is helping to develop advisory boards of Childhelp USA in California and Washington.

"She has been really a leader," said Steve Stirling of the Childhelp USA national office. "She's doing a really great job in bringing vision and excitement."

For information on the organization, call (248) 844-1547.

You can reach Kim Kozlowski at (313) 222-2024 or kkozlowski@detnews.com.

FOC to provide spot for estranged couples to swap kids

Thursday, February 09, 2006

By Larry O'Connor
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The state police's Jackson post parking lot often serves as a demilitarized zone for divorced parents with children.

Perhaps because of lingering bitterness, some estranged couples only feel comfortable completing custody exchanges with law enforcement nearby. For that reason, the visitors lot at Cooper Street and Parnall Road has become a staging area.

"In divorce situations, there are a lot of hard feelings," said Sgt. Timothy McGaffigan. "We're just kind of a central meeting place."

With a new \$20,000 Access and Visitation grant, Jackson County Friend of the Court officials want to remove the hostility and awkwardness of those encounters -- at least for the kids.

The state Court Administrator's Office grant will allow exchanges to take place under supervision at FOC offices on Lansing Avenue, said Andy Crisenbery, Friend of the Court administrator. Parents will arrive and leave separately. The supervised process also allows staff to document parents showing up late or any other problems.

Those supervised exchanges will take place on Friday and Sunday nights. Couples will pay a minimum of \$10 for the service, said Janet Gage, Friend of the Court attorney and referee.

The grant will allow supervised exchanges for up to 10 families a weekend, Gage said.

The Child and Parent Center at 606 Greenwood Place will assist in problem cases.

The pilot program is designed to teach parents how to conduct those meetings without the rancor.

"Once they get used to a regular process, hopefully the parents are able to move on," Gage said.

This Week in Washington

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House Passes Budget Reconciliation Bill; President to Sign

On February 1, the House passed the amended conference report for S. 1932, the Deficit Control Act of 2005, by a vote of 216–214. The vote was largely along party lines, although 13 Republicans joined 200 Democrats and one Independent in voting against the bill. The vote was the final step in congressional action on the measure, which now goes to the president for signature. The Senate passed the bill last December 21 by 51–50, with Vice President Cheney casting the tie-breaking vote. The Senate made minor changes in the version that the House had approved on December 19, thus requiring the bill to pass the House again. The legislation saves \$39 billion over five years and makes major changes in a number of public human service programs, including Medicaid, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), child support, and child welfare. The bill reauthorizes TANF and modifies the program in a number of respects. It reduces the caseload reduction credit for most states; has no state set-asides for marriage and family grants; eliminates the high performance and out-of-wedlock bonuses; provides the secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) with authority to regulate circumstances in which a child-only case can be included in the work rate; and mandates new work verification systems by October 1, 2006, with substantial new penalties for noncompliance. The legislation retains the 10 percent TANF transfer to the Social Services Block Grant.

In Medicaid, the bill would make the following major changes:

- Modifies the way in which pharmaceutical pricing is calculated.
- Increases the asset transfer look-back period from three to five years and changes the penalty period to begin at the time of application.
- Allows states to set up different benefit packages for selected beneficiary groups.
- At state option, allows states to enforce cost-sharing and premiums for certain beneficiaries.
- Increases federal programs designed to cut “waste, fraud, and abuse” in Medicaid programs by establishing additional programs and audits.
- Restricts the use of State Children’s Health Insurance Program funds to cover adults without dependents.
- Requires that individuals present documentation proving citizenship prior to enrolling in Medicaid.
- Provides for some expansion of services for individuals with disabilities, including Money Follows the Person, Cash and Counseling, and psychiatric treatment for children.
- Changes the definition of Targeted Case Management (TCM), case management services, and

third-party liability.

- Provides for 10 months of 100 percent Federal Medicaid Assistance Percentage coverage for states that applied for Katrina 1115 waivers.

Highlights of changes in other programs include:

- Increases child care funding by \$1 billion and provides \$1 billion in new Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funding for fiscal year 2007.
- Institutes a new \$25 child support user fee; eliminates the ability of states to use child support incentive grant funds to match federal dollars; and includes a series of child support changes from House and Senate TANF proposals.
- Leaves in substantial changes to the language on third-party liability and TCM that concerned states; the TCM language would prohibit certain foster care services from being covered by Medicaid's TCM.
- Eliminates child welfare administrative claims for most otherwise-federally eligible children in unlicensed foster homes and for children in ineligible facilities such as detention centers, psychiatric and medical hospitals, and institutions with more than 25 beds. Both provisions have certain exceptions.
- Imposes a new requirement to conduct foster care candidacy redeterminations every six months in order to continue claiming administrative funds.
- Reverses the *Rosales v. Thompson* decision by limiting the determination of eligibility for IV-E foster care maintenance and adoption assistance for children placed with relatives.

More information on the bill is on the APHSA web site at <http://www.aphsa.org/Home/bud-rec-bill-docs.asp>.

House Republicans Elect Majority Leader

On February 2, Republicans in the House of Representatives elected Rep. John Boehner (Ohio), chairman of the Education and the Workforce Committee, as the majority leader. Rep. Tom DeLay (R-Texas) stepped aside from that post last fall, and Rep. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) was serving as the acting majority leader until today's vote.

Senate Aging Panel Holds Hearing on Part D Implementation

On February 2, the Senate Special Committee on Aging held a hearing on problems that have developed during implementation of the Medicare Part D prescription drug benefit and on steps that can be taken to improve the situation. Eight witnesses provided testimony, including Mark McClellan, administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS); Linda McMahon, deputy commissioner for operation, Social Security Administration; Medicare beneficiaries (including dual eligibles); representatives from state agencies; and representatives from drug plans and insurers in the states. The committee's chairman, Sen. Gordon Smith (R-Ore.), said the goal of the hearing was to evaluate CMS' ability to handle the current Part D problems and offset additional problems in the future. Committee members raised a number of concerns regarding the first month of the program, with particular reference to the dual eligible population. Members also posed questions to McClellan, addressing issues such as reimbursement for pharmacists and state Medicaid agencies, the accessibility of the program for seniors, and the potential role for Congress.

Medicaid Commission Holds Meeting

From January 24 to January 26, members of the Medicaid Commission convened to address the second

task assigned to them by HHS Secretary Michael Leavitt: to develop long-term recommendations for the Medicaid program that will provide quality care in a fiscally sustainable fashion. The focus of the meeting was the topic of eligibility, which is the first of the five modules that the commission will discuss. Formal presentations began with an overview and summary of the eligibility-related recommendations in the various Medicaid reform proposals; Medicaid eligibility; state responses to increased pressure on Medicaid enrollment and public financing; the intersection of Medicaid with private health insurance; and caring for the uninsured. There were three state presentations that focused on program reform initiatives in Idaho, Massachusetts, and West Virginia. Idaho presented on the state's proposal to simplify Medicaid eligibility categories based on health needs through an 1115 waiver. Massachusetts described its use of an 1115 waiver to provide private insurance to the uninsured. West Virginia presented its Medicaid redesign proposal, with specific reference to the simplification of eligibility. The next Medicaid Commission meeting is tentatively scheduled for March 14 through March 15, 2006, in Atlanta. All materials from the meeting will be made available online at http://www.cms.hhs.gov/FACA/10_mc.asp#TopOfPage.

HHS Publishes Poverty Guidelines

On January 24, HHS published its 2006 poverty guidelines. The guidelines account for last calendar year's increase in prices as measured by the Consumer Price Index. For a family of four, the HHS guideline is \$20,000 (for Alaska, \$25,000, and Hawaii, \$23,000). Programs using the guidelines (or percentage multiples of the guidelines, such as 125 percent or 185 percent) in determining eligibility include the State Children's Health Insurance Program and the Food Stamp Program (FSP). Among other programs utilizing the guidelines are parts of Medicaid (28 percent of eligibles in FY 2003); the Community Services Block Grant; the Community Food and Nutrition Program; the AIDS Drug Assistance Program; and Community Health Centers. The notice was published in the January 24, 2006, issue of the Federal Register (71 FR 3848-3849), and is available at <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20061800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2006/06-624.htm>.

Food Stamp Participation Sets Record at Over 29.5 Million

According to the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), 29,596,860 persons participated in the FSP during November 2005. The figure is an all-time record, easily exceeding the previous high number of 27.474 million set during 1994. The number reflects the large number of persons brought onto the program by last fall's hurricane disasters. The disasters caused participation to surge especially in Louisiana, Texas, Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, Arkansas, and Florida. Even before the hurricanes, FSP participation had been rising steadily, most likely due to a combination of the uneven economy, state and federal outreach efforts, and program simplifications in the 2002 farm bill. More details on FSP participation are available at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/fspmain.htm>.

FNS Proposes Information Collection on Florida Modernization Model

On January 6, FNS published a notice of proposed information collection on the Florida Department of Children and Families Services' (DCFS) eligibility modernization plans. DCFS is implementing a number of organizational changes, simplified policies, streamlined procedures, and technology improvements that it says will improve FSP access, customer service, and administrative efficiency. Key features of the changes include toll-free phone access to regional call centers; an interactive voice response system; an Internet-based application; document scanning; automated support for some verification procedures; and partnerships with community-based service providers to engage them in client application support and other customer assistance activities. According to FNS, the agency is seeking Office of Management and the Budget (OMB) approval to collect data on the DCFS modernization model so that it can understand better the relationship between FSP structure, operations, costs, and performance. FNS proposes to describe the changes, identify how technology is used to support eligibility determination and case management; describe the roles and experiences of staff, vendors, and community partners; working at different levels; understand the experiences and

satisfaction of FSP participants, applicants, and eligible non-participants; and describe FSP performance over time. The information will be gathered through a contractor via interviews with clients and staff and through reviews of administrative data. Comments on the proposal are due by March 7, and should be sent to Erika Jones, FNS, 3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, VA 22302. Comments may also be submitted via fax to (703) 305-2576 or via e mail to erika.jones@fns.usda.gov. The notice was published in the January 6 Federal Register (71 FR 908-909) and is available at <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20061800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2006/E6-33.htm>.

FNS Proposes Information Collection on Disaster Plans

On December 22, 2005, FNS published a notice of proposed information collection on the data states must submit to receive approval to operate an emergency FSP due to a disaster. The notice indicates that the information in question is that already required by FNS, but that the frequency of recent disaster declarations has raised the burden threshold high enough to require OMB approval for the collection activity. Comments on the proposed collection are due by February 21 and should be sent to Patrick Waldron, FNS, 3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, VA 22302. Comments may also be faxed to (703) 305-2486, or e mailed to Patrick.Waldron@fns.usda.gov. The notice was published in the December 22, 2005, Federal Register (70 FR 76019-76020) and is available at <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20051800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2005/E5-7689.htm>.

Report on State Child and Family Policies

In January, the Center for the Study of Social Policy released a report titled *Twenty State Policies to Enhance States' Prosperity and Create Bright Futures for America's Children, Families and Communities*. The report highlights effective policies in the areas of income and asset growth, employment, health, education, and family relationships, and support. The appendix also includes data sources for the information provided to support each policy recommendation. The report is available at <http://www.policymatters.us>.